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Kylian Mbappe scores the second goal to take match into extra-time | AP

THREE KYLIAN MBAPPE BECAME THE SECOND PLAYER TO SCORE HAT-TRICK IN WORLD CUP FINAL

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PM hints at FIFA-like event in India, unveils slew of projects in NE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Guwahati

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched a slew of development projects in poll-bound Tripura and Meghalaya, and said that the northeast region has benefited the most from various development initiatives of the Centre.

Addressing a public rally in Agartala, he said the region, which was earlier known for conflicts, is now synonymous with development, connectivity and cleanliness. Highlighting the BJP government's focus on development, he said his government is spending as much as ₹7 lakh crore on infrastructure this year. In contrast, the amount was less than ₹2 lakh crore eight years ago, he added.

In Meghalaya, Modi chose to speak the language of football. Speaking at a function in Shillong, he said India will host a mega global sports event like the FIFA World Cup in the near future where Indians will cheer for the tricolour. Dropping hints that such an event will be held in region, he said the World Cup might be underway in Qatar but the enthusiasm and excitement were no less in the Northeast.

"Today I can say from Shillong that even if we have our eyes on the foreign teams playing the game in Qatar, I have faith in the power of our youth. The day is not far off when we will celebrate the same kind of extravaganza and cheer for the tricolour," Modi said amid thunderous applause. He was speaking after attending the golden jubilee celebration of the North Eastern Council. "In football, if someone plays against the spirit of the game, then the player is shown red card and sent off. In a similar way, over the last five years in the Northeast, we have shown red card to any obstacles against development," Modi said, adding, "We tried to remove corruption, division, violence, vote-bank politics to pave the way for development."

Tripura gets projects worth ₹4,300 crore

The PM inaugurated a slew of development projects worth ₹4,300 cr in Tripura. He said the "double-engine government" is determined to implement development projects in the state

FOOT OF GOD

Finally, Messi wins World Cup, thwarts France's spirited comeback led by Mbappe's hat-trick in a pulsating final

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN

ROSARIO's rose-tinted boy finally has the World Cup trophy. Two years after losing Diego Maradona, a football-obsessed, trophy-starved nation will look up to the heavens not thinking about the past but about the present. Thirty-six years after one of Argentina's greatest heroes delivered them the sport's holy grail, they have once again reached the promised land.

Holders France, who had the opportunity to become the first team to go back-to-back since Brazil in 1958 and 1962, were expected to seriously challenge for the title. And they did. After taking time to enter into the encounter — Argentina were winning 2-0 with 10 minutes left on the clock when the defending champions belatedly woke up — they threatened to spoil Lionel Messi's dream farewell. From 2-0 and one hand on the trophy, France scored twice inside 100 seconds to equalise. The identity of both those goals was Kylian Mbappe, whose hat-trick illuminated a packed Lusail Stadium.

Messi had scored one, contributed to a thrilling counter-attacking goal to make it 2-0 before Mbappe showed why he's ideally placed to replace Messi as the best player in world football. In the second half of extra-time, Messi added a third, his second of the evening that just dribbled over the line before it was cleared (it was clearly over), before Mbappe added a third from the penalty spot. In the shoot-out, Argentina, like they had showed against Netherlands, kept their nerve. Both Mbappe and Messi took responsibility to open and succeeded.

The match itself was largely pedestrian in terms of quality before France's late onslaught. It's possible they took time to get going because of a flu that had been going on in their camp. While that may have been a factor in Les Bleus' poor start, what changed the momentum from the very off was the inclusion of Angel di Maria. Even before the opening goal, Argentina were playing the kind of football they like to play. Front-foot, energetic and full of freedom. That kind of ethos was why coach Lionel Scaloni opted to bring Di Maria. It made wonders as Di Maria, before being substituted just past the hour mark, had scored, assisted and given the French right-back, Jules Kounde, a horrible evening.

In that same blink of an eye, the match turned as France came back. Mbappe, who will surely go on to break all World Cup goalscoring records, scored two in the time it takes to wash a hand properly these days. Then Messi and Mbappe traded a goal each before Martinez, one of the best keepers from 12 yards, stood out to give his country a third World Cup title.

As Montiel found the back of the net to lift 36 years of hurt, Messi, standing on the centre circle, slumped to his knees. The man who had famously been slagged off for not feeling Argentine enough, a man who had been attacked by a few for not singing the national anthem with passion had had a big hand in winning the title they crave.

Rosario's golden boy had dreamt the wildest of dreams. He delivered on it. P13

13 goals

Messi now has 13 World Cup goals – one more than Brazil great Pelé – and is the first player to score in the group stage and every round of the knockout stage in a single edition of the tournament

WHAT MESSI HAS ACHIEVED

Thirty-seven club trophies, seven Ballon D'Or awards and six European Golden Boots. A Copa America title, an Olympic gold medal and a list of scoring and statistical records.

Lionel Messi holds aloft the World Cup after beating France in penalty shoot-off in the final on Sunday. After 3-3 draw at the end of extra-time, Argentina won 4-2 in penalty shoot-out | AP

B'gavi session to witness protests from 60 groups

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

AS Belagavi Suvarna Soudha is all set to host the 10-day winter session of the legislature from Monday, as many as 60 rallies and dharnas have been planned by various organisations to seek the attention of the government.

While opposition party members are gearing up to put the ruling BJP government on the mat on various issues inside the Assembly and Council, Belagavi police have received applications from 60 organisations seeking permission to hold protests outside the House. Basavajaya Mrutyunjaya Swamiji of Kudalasangama Panchamasali Peeta who is demanding 2A reservation to Panchamasalis has warned the state government that they are going to seize Suvarna Soudha on Thursday.

While Dalit Sangarsha Samithi (DSS) is taking out a 'Belagavi Chalo' protest march demanding the implementation of Justice A J Sadashiva's report on reservation, Karnataka Sugarcane Growers Association members, who have been holding a protest in Bengaluru for the last one month, have shifted to Belagavi.

Workers clean the lawn of Suvarna Soudha ahead of the winter session which is set to begin from Monday in Belagavi | KPN

Savarkar portrait may trigger row in Assembly

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Belagavi

THE proposed installation of a portrait of Hindutva ideologue V D Savarkar in the Assembly Hall is expected to create a controversy in both Houses on the first day of the winter session of legislature at Suvarna Soudha in Belagavi on Monday.

Opposition leaders said they have been invited for the unveiling ceremony of Dr B R Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi's portraits on Monday. The government has reportedly made arrangements to unveil seven portraits, including that of Savarkar in the hall.

KPCC president D K Shivakumar said he is happy to be invited for unveiling of Gandhi and Ambedkar's portraits. He, however, said only after seeing whose portraits have been installed in the Assembly, the course of action will be decided.

Siddaramaiah called Savarkar (instead of Nathuram Godse) as Gandhi's assassin. "Why the portrait of Savarkar in the House now? There is no need for it. Savarkar is a controversial personality," he said, adding that he has not received any invitation for the event.

KPCC working president Satish Jarkiholi said he never expected this to happen. This will be discussed in the campaign committee meeting of Congress, he said.

Boy plays with gun, kills 7-yr-old bro

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

IN a tragic incident, a seven-year-old boy died after his elder brother (15), while playing with a single-barrel gun accidentally fired a bullet which hit him. The incident occurred in Kadushivanahalli village of Kodihalli in Kanakapura taluk of Ramanagara district on Saturday afternoon.

The deceased has been identified as Shamabin, son of Ameenullah, who hails from Chandauli district in Uttar Pradesh. Police said Ameenullah, who works in a farm, has six children and his second child has been booked in the case. His employer Mallesh (51) has been arrested under the Arms Act for possessing the weapon illegally.

"Ameenullah and his family had come to Karnataka 5-6 months ago and were working in Mysuru. As the work was nearing completion, he contacted his friend Ajay Prajapati, who hails from his native and asked him to find him some work. Prajapati, who was working in Kodihalli, asked the family to come to Kodihalli following which the family shifted on December 14 and started looking for a job. Mallesh offered them to work in his farm. The family went there on Friday and started living in a shed," the police said.

On Saturday morning, Ameenullah and his wife, along with four of their children, went to Prajapati's house leaving Shamabin and another son in the shed. "Around 1.30 pm, his son contacted him over the phone and asked him to come immediately. Ameenullah rushed home to find Shamabin lying in a pool of blood. He asked his son what happened and the latter narrated that he was playing in the shed and came across a gun kept on sacks. He started playing with the gun and pressed the trigger. The pellets hit Shamabin in the head and an eye, when he was having lunch sitting on the floor," the police added.

Kodihalli police have detained the boy. Mallesh said he got the weapon "somewhere" and kept it in the shed, unaware that it was loaded.

EXPRESS READ

Iranian actor arrested for backing protests

Tehran: Iran on Saturday arrested actor Taraneh Alidoosti, known for her role in the Oscar-winning film *The Salesman* for backing the nationwide protests | P11

Morality dictated by dominant groups: CJI

The Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on Saturday said that morality is a fluid concept that varies from person to person. But it is often dictated by dominant groups. He was delivering a lecture on 'Law and Morality: Bounds and Reaches'.

Classmates stop marriage of minor girl in West Bengal

PRANAB MONDAL @ Kolkata

A friend in need is a friend indeed. A minor student in West Bengal's West Midnapore district perhaps realised this on Saturday, when her classmates intervened to stop her from being married off against her wishes.

The class IX students of Golar Sushila High School in Golar noticed that their classmate has not been attending school for the past week. Once they found out that her marriage has been fixed, the students rushed to her house and demanded that she be allowed to return to school. Sensing trouble, the girl's family secretly took her to the would-be groom's house through the back door.

When the students came to know about this, they went to the groom's house and threatened to launch an indefinite protest.

In a bid to avoid trouble, the groom's family handed her over to the agitating students, who then took her back to their school. The school's headmaster Suresh Chandra Padia praised the students and said the marriage was avoided only because of their determination. Dipak Kumar Ghosh, the block development officer of Keshpur block, where the school is located, said her family has promised not to marry her off before she turns 18.

The girl's neighbours said her family decided to marry her off early due to financial problems.

EXPORT TO RESUME

M'luru fish to get back wings to fly

DIVYA CUTINHO @ Mangaluru

THE export of chilled fish from the coastal region of Karnataka to foreign countries via air is expected to resume soon after a gap of five years. The fish was earlier flown by Air India flights but stopped due to recession, falling prices in the international market and complaints about improper packaging and leakage.

Fisheries Minister S Angara said the matter has been taken up with Air India and two other airlines and a process to resolve technical issues will be completed soon.

Harish Kumar, Joint Director, Dakshina Kannada Fisheries Department, told *The New Indian Express*, "The airlines are refusing to carry chilled fish from Mangalore International Airport. As a result, the fish caught from Mangaluru and Malpe ports is being transported in trucks by road to Bengaluru, Goa, Kozhikode or Thiruvananthapuram, and from there it is exported overseas, especially to the Middle East. But it is a costly affair and consumes a lot of time. The minister has discussed the matter with the airline authorities and the services are likely to resume, but with conditions."

The authorities also say that the packaging of fish should be of international standards for services to resume. On an average 70,000 metric tonne of fish is exported from Dakshina Kannada and Udupi annually via cargo ships.